

ATTACHMENT 2
INFORMAL RESPONSES TO EPA COMMENTS (Letter 8HWM-FF)
DRAFT OU1 HABITAT MITIGATION PLAN

RESPONSE

- (1) page 1, ¶ 2, sentence 4: The plan to create wetland habitat elsewhere than on the French Drain site is being viewed incorrectly as an attempt to avoid restoration of habitat and wetland values rather than as the basis for providing levels of mitigation well in excess of minimum requirements. The plan proposes to replace 400 m² of marginal, depauperate wetland vegetation with several hectares of full function, high value wetland in an area of the buffer zone where the possibility of successful establishment is the greatest. It is our considered professional opinion that such bulk replacement of wetland is an ecologically relevant, technically feasible, and potentially more successful solution than replacement on a project by project basis. As noted in the plan, a construction effort of this magnitude will require a considerable level of planning and coordination to be successful and the 1 to 3 year time frame merely reflects the realities of undertaking such work at Rocky Flats Plant (RFP).
- (2) page 1, ¶ 2, sentence 5: The plan, if executed as designed, will fulfill DOE's Clean Water Act obligations to a degree well beyond what might be expected if only the depauperate, jurisdictional wetland, which existed at OU1 prior to construction, were replaced in-kind.
- (3) page 1, ¶ 2, sentence 7: The plan takes into account all reasonable and potential natural resource injuries emanating from French Drain construction and seeks to provide in-kind, if not in-place, remedies in an amount well in excess of the original losses. It is important to note that the term "wetland" as used in the draft habitat mitigation plan refers to a jurisdictional wetland rather than a true, fully functional wetland. The "wetland" at OU1 was characterized only by the presence of hydrophilic vegetation (willows and cattails) and did not meet all of the criteria which define true wetlands (soil type, hydrology, geology, saturated soil for 15 or more days per year, etc.). The OU1 wetland was not sufficiently developed to fulfill any functions, other than habitat functions, normally ascribed to true wetlands under the Clean Water Act.
- (4) page 1, ¶ 2, sentence 7: Both DOE and EG&G have a high level of concern regarding the protection, restoration, and maintenance of habitat and natural resource values at RFP. However, both DOE and EG&G feel strongly that a comprehensive, well designed, and fully planned sitewide mitigation effort will better serve the preservation and enhancement of resource values at RFP than any poorly conceived, limited, and hastily executed mitigation effort.
- (5) page 1, ¶ 3, sentence 2: A meeting to discuss the various issues surrounding wetlands and the draft habitat mitigation plan would be extremely useful.